DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 192 938 RC 011 780

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Van Brocklin, Bruce, Ed. |
| TITLE | Learning Years: Profiles in Indian Adult Education. |
| INSTITUTION | United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, Seattle, Wash. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Office of Indian Education. |
| PUB DATE | 79 |
| NOTE | 54p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | UIATF, PO Box 99253, Seattle, WA 98199 (free while supply lasts). |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC03 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Adult Basic Education; Adult Students; American Indian Education; *American Indians; Biographies; *Educational Attainment; *Educational Benefits; *Educational Opportunities; Employment Opportunities; *High School Equivalency Programs; Motivation; Participant Satisfaction; Quality of Life |

ABSTRACT

Biographical sketches of 37 American Indian adults who successfully completed high school equivalency programs are compiled in this booklet designed to meet the two-fold purpose of honoring adult Indian students who have overcome hardships to achieve their educational goals and improving the educational outlook for Indian children through encouraging Indian parents to participate in educational programs. The biographical sketches are arranged under 22 Indian adult education programs, many funded by Title IV of the Indian Education Act of 1972. The biographies, ranging in length from one to several paragraphs, report the educational accomplishments of Indian adults of all ages (from late teens to late sixties), representing over 15 tribes. Emphasis is placed on the individuals' reasons for dropping out of school, their motivation for resuming study, and the benefits from obtaining the GED (General Educational Development Test) diploma. Frequently reported benefits are feelings of personal accomplishment, better jobs, and the opportunity to enroll in higher education degree programs. The booklet includes photographs of many biographees and addresses, phone numbers, and contact persons for each of the participating programs. (JH)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

# LEARNING YEARS

*Profiles in Indian Adult Education*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED192938

RC011780

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

UIATF
M. Graves

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

## *INTRODUCTION*

The idea for this publication of student profiles originated among Indian adult education program directors at a workshop in Reno, Nevada in December, 1978.

Although much has been written about the accomplishments of programs working with Indian children, little has been said of the adults—the parents of tomorrow's Indian leaders. It was decided to put together a booklet about the accomplishments of the *adult* indian students and honor them for overcoming many hardships to achieve their educational goals.

The profiles contained in ***LEARNING YEARS*** were written by students, teachers, program directors and others. Many of the programs represented are presently funded under Title IV, Part C, of the Indian Education Act of June, 1972. (Formally Public Law 92-318, Education Amendments of 1972)

Research which led to the adoption of the Indian Education Act indicated the average educational level for all Indians was 8.4 years. In grades 8-12, the dropout rate was 39-48 percent. A survey showed that 36 percent of the parents of Indian children had not continued beyond high school and that parental participation in their children's education was minimal. It is important, therefore, to recognize the tremendous impact the educational backgound of the parent has on the development of the Indian child educationally. It is this need toward which the efforts of Indian adult educators is directed.

Throughout this publication, the reader will come across two abbreviations. GED stands for general educational development. Passage of the GED test is regarded as evidence of passing competencies equivalent to a high school education. ABE stands for adult basic education

which is a program to provide adults not enrolled in school with the skills acquired in elementary and secondary education.

*Bruce Van Brocklin*
*Editor*
*Seattle, Washington 1979*

●

***NATIONAL INDIAN ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION***

*The association is composed of Indian adult educators from across the United States who are concerned with the future of Indian adult education. The association publishes the bi-monthly* INDIAN EDUCATOR *magazine and sponsors presentations of Indian adult education concerns at meetings and conferences on adult education nationally. For information on joining, contact:*

*Ms. Leann Tallbear*
*President*
*National Indian Adult Education Association*
*Red School House*
*643 Virginia Street*
*St. Paul, Minnesota 55103*

●

***ABOUT THE COVER:*** *The cover was designed by Yasu Osawa. The artwork is a container lid produced by Marie-Louise Flamand, a Têtes-de-Boule who resides in the upper St. Maurice Distirct of Quebec. Canada.*

●

*Copyright 1979 by United Indians of All Tribes Foundation Adult and Vocational Education Program. Box 99253, Seattle, Washington, 98199.*

---

*This publication was made possible, in part, with funds from the Office of Indian Education, U.S. Office of Education.Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of United Indians of All Tribes nor the Office of Indian Education.*

**MOHAWK TRIBAL COUNCIL**
**St. Regis Mohawk Indian Reservation**
**Akwesasne (Hogansburg), New York 13655**
**(518) 358-2980**

*Elizabeth Perkins*
*ABE/GED Program Director*

***Wentahwi***

This short story is about myself after leaving school . I'd like to tell you a little about how I finally realized the importance of school and decided to go back to school to get my diploma.

First of all, I'd like to begin by telling you about my homelife while going to high school. I came from a very large family of eight brothers and five sisters. I was the seventh one born and also the first daughter. My grades were fairly good and I made the honor roll sometimes. I always had ambitions to go into nursing or a science related career. But things didn't turn out as I had thought they would. I began to go steady with a fellow who was two years older than myself. We went together for about a year and a half and then we got married in 1965. I finished my ninth year and he finished his tenth.

We worked very hard together to clear a large piece of land that was to be our home. By the time we were settled after a few years, we had two children. Things began to look better and got easier for us. After six years, I had my third child and she kept us pretty busy until she went off to school. Everything seemed to quiet around the house. I thought to myself, "Here's my chance to finish school." I enrolled myself along with a friend at a GED center in our town. It seemed easier to come with a

friend to study together and try to help each other. We came to school at least 3 times a week and saved my evenings for studying. I felt so proud having my children around me as I did my work.

Finally it was time to take our equivalency test. After about six weeks, I got my reply from the testing center. That day was one of the happiest days of my life because as I opened it there was the diploma I had worked for!

I did not want to quit there so I signed myself up for some extension courses from Mater Dei. I hoped that it would begin to prepare me for my future goals. I am presently working as a tutor for the ABE/GED program in Akwesasne. I enjoy working here because I have gotten to meet so many people. The greatest joy is seeing the students progress in their studies. I can almost see myself in them as I was going to school and seeing the help I was getting from my teachers. Much of my success has to go with being able to learn and work among my native people.

***Jack Terrance***

My name is Jack Terrance. I dropped out of school when I was sixteen years old. The reason that I dropped out was due to my father's poor health. My help was needed to keep the family going—I had five brothers to help support.

At the age of seventeen I went into the service. The service provided an allotment for my family until I was twenty-one. Because of the allotment I was able to help my brother with his education.

I am married and have nine children. I worked for twenty-seven years as an

ironworker all over New York state. In 1975 I had to quit work for health reasons. It was then that I decided to go back to school and get my high school diploma. I studied persistently for five months and I passed the high school equivalency exam.

Because I received a high school diploma, I felt I was ready to take some college courses. It seems like I always wanted to go to college. I now work for CETA Manpower as a carpenter on the reservation and I am taking college extension courses in the evening from Mater Dei College. I am majoring in Sociology. I also attend a non-credit blueprinting course to help me in my job.

I have three sons who are presently enrolled at the ABE/GED center and I encourage them to continue and get their high school diploma.

***Dorothy Jacobs***

I dropped out of school in the ninth grade in 1933 at the age of fourteen. With my mother's passing away in the era of the Depression, there were financial difficulties in our home as with many other homes in the country. After dropping out of school my financial contributions to the household consisted of doing housework in private homes and clerking in a store.

At the age of 33, I went to work in a factory. I worked there for twenty-five years. During this time there was a separation in my brother's marriage. This left three children (ages six, five, and three) without a mother, and I agreed to take them into my home. To this day the youngest, who is twenty-

two years old, still lives with me.

After taking care of three children and working for twenty-five years, I grew discontented with my job. In 1974, I enrolled in an adult education program on the reservation to achieve my high school equivalency diploma. Three evenings a week I would work eight hours, come home and prepare the evening meal, and then attend classes from seven to nine. If I had a vacation I went to class full time. As we have severe winters in the north country, there would be times while waiting for my ride that it got cold and stormy. After two years of studying for my GED, I took my exam on April 18th and 19th, 1976 and passed. In the fall of that same year I registered with Mater Dei College. They have extension classes at the Akwesasne Library and I enrolled for an Associate of Arts degree in Education.

In July, 1978, I was offered a position as tutor for the adult education program. I accepted and started work in September. There were no regrets about leaving my old job because I am now making a worthwhile contribution to people on the reserve by helping them improve their reading and math skills. Because I have been there and have knowledge of the Mohawk language, I feel that I am doing my share for the Mohawk people.

***Diane Connors***

At the age of seventeen I decided I had enough schooling. Coming from a family of sixteen, anyone leaving school had to either get a job or get married as soon as possible. I chose to move to Rochester, New York and find work. I

worked in a factory until I got married and then stayed home to raise my family. When the children went to school, I went back to work. It seems funny that the employers were never that particular about a high school diploma.

After thirteen years of living in Rochester, my husband and I decided to move back and live in Akwesasne. Like in the city it was easy for me to find a job in a factory. It was working at this job that I really began to think about my future. I began to question if factory work was all there was. I wasn't happy at this particular job so I decided to go back to class and get my high school diploma. I went to Cornwall, enrolling at St. Lawrence Adult Education. It was rough trying to get there in the winter. At this time I did not know about the ABE/GED program in Hogansburg.

When I found out about the program and that they offered classes in GED instruction, I decided to give it a try. I quit at St. Lawrence and started attending classes at the adult center, because it was closer to home and the instructors were Native American. The girls were real helpful at making me feel at ease and I found that it wasn't as difficult as I expected. I guess that was the main reason why I didn't attempt to complete my education sooner. I finally decided to do something when my children brought back homework that I couldn't understand and couldn't help them with their work.

I studied for a year and a half taking time out to plant a garden. In the fall I continued my classes and I took my exam in January of 1979. Even though I did not receive the results, I continued to attend classes at the center. This time I decided to try my hand at

secretarial skills. I also enrolled in some college courses at the Akwesasne Cultural Center, in the evening. Once I got started with the college classes, the teachers at the adult education program kept encouraging me to finish. I received the results of my exam in April and I am very proud of myself—I actually passed. I guess taking the secretarial courses in the morning is my real joy. Now all I need is a job to make my story a real success.

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR INDIAN PEOPLE**
**Rt.2, Box 2B, Downing Road**
**Fayetteville, North Carolina 28301**

*Shelby Jean Conley*
*ABE/GED Director/Teacher*

***Cleta June Brewington***

Cleta June Brewington,23, left school at age 17 to become a housewife.

Several times during the following six years, she enrolled in GED classes at a local technical institute. However, the atmosphere was such that after a class or two, she would drop out.

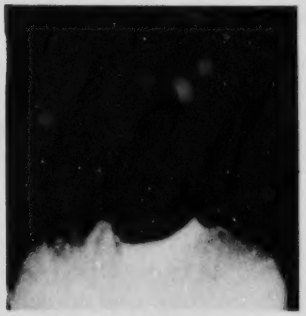
In September, 1978, she heard about the Cumberland County Association for Indian People's GED class. She came to the Center, liked what she heard and saw, and enrolled. She, her mother, and several of her sisters-in-law created a family affair. She worked dilligently until completion in February, 1979.

During this four month period, class became an important, interesting, and rewarding part of her life. Upon completion, she found it difficult to stay away. She still comes to class on occasion to work with friends or family members one-on-one to provide help that cannot be fully offered by staff members.

She brought with her an interest in art. Therefore, she seized upon the opportunity to work under the supervision and training of a well-known floral designer in the community and hopes that some day she will own her own floral shop and be able to share what she has learned with others like herself.

**NISQUALLY INDIAN TRIBE**
**Adult Education Program**
**Box 579**
**Yelm, Washington 98597**

*Maria Fletter*
*Program Director*



***Ernie Frank***

Ernie Frank,20, a Quinault Indian, received his GED diploma recently. Ernie was born in Aberdeen, Washington and moved to Yelm in 1976. He was attending Yelm High School when he decided to quit at the end of 11th grade. After searching the job market, Ernie discovered that getting a job without a high school diploma was difficult. He began tutorial sessions at the Nisqually Tribal Center, and within five months, succeeded in passing the GED test. Ernie felt he was able to work at his own pace, and liked the individual attention he received. He plans to continue his education and become a carpenter. He will be attending Haskel Junior College.

***Darla McElwain***

Darla McElwain,31, lives in Yelm, Washington with her husband and five children. She is of Eskimo descent, and an avid collector of Alaskan artifacts. She has recently received her GED diploma. When asked why she enrolled in a GED program, Darla replied, "I had never thought about trying to get a GED until I read a notice put up by the Nisqually Indian Tribe. My oldest son would be entering high school next year, and I began wondering how could I expect him to continue school when I had dropped out as a sophomore?"

With both the children and Darla

attending classes, the family became closer. The children thought it was "super neat" that they and their mother all had homework. Darla feels that the GED has given her incentive to continue with her education. She is presently taking a typing class and plans to enroll in a teacher training course soon.

***Frankie McCloud***

Frankie McCloud is the Social Service Director for the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Through hard work and perseverance, she was able to achieve this status.

Frankie, born in Tacoma, Washington, was the second oldest in a family of nine children. She was forced to drop out of school in the 8th grade in order to help support her family. During the next 25 years, she earned her living as a farm laborer, a cannery worker and a truck driver. She also got married and had 7 children.

After several years, her husband became disabled. Frankie decided to get her GED so that she could get a better job. Having completed this, she did some volunteer work at the Yelm Community Center. As a result of her dedication and hard work, she became the director of the Center.

It was during this time that she realized she would like to pursue a career in the Social Service field. She was able to receive training through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)-New Career Program. She attended Centralia College and received an Associate Degree in Social Sciences.

She continued working for DSHS as a social worker. She enrolled at The Evergreen State College and completed her work through the Native American Studies Program. She then decided that she would best use her talents towards helping her own people. She became Tribal Vice-Chairperson. She then worked as a business manager trainee and, for the past three years, has held her present position.

**DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION**
**Oglala Sioux Community College**
**Pine Ridge, South Dakota 57770**

*Irmina Red Owl*
*Field Coordinator*

---

***Issac White Face***

GED graduate, Issac White Face, is the Parent Coordinator with the Parent-Child Center in Porcupine, South Dakota. White Face, 53, is an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Pine Ridge Reservation, in South Dakota. He is married, and has three children. Issac is presently residing in his new house in the community of Porcupine on the Pine Ridge Reservation. He also drives a new air-conditioned car.

Issac was born on November 5, 1925. Life was very hard on the reservation during his growing up years. He began his educational experiences in a B.I.A. school located in Porcupine, South Dakota. White Face continued into high school at the Oglala Community High School which was a boarding school. He went as far as the 10th grade, which was quite an accomplishment in itself. At the time, education beyond the eighth grade was not encouraged by Indian families.

Two important things happened to Issac in January, 1944. He married Zona Bearshield from the Rosebud Reservation and he was drafted into the Army. Issac was sent for training to Camp Robinson at Little Rock, Arkansas. Then he was stationed at Ft. Ord, California. During World War II, he was sent to several places including New Caledonia. White Face was wounded in the leg and sent to a hospital in Hawaii.

After the war, White Face was stationed in Virginia where his wife joined him and where his oldest son was born. During his tour of duty, he was also stationed in Aberdeen, Maryland, and Ft. Knox, Kentucky. He was discharged in May, 1947.

Following his years in the service, the family of Issac White Face increased with the addition of another son and a daughter. By now he and his family were living on the reservation. Jobs were scarce and like eveyone else on the reservation, life became difficult for the White Face family. In his struggle to provide for his family, Issac worked hard as a hired hand on farms and ranches in the bordering states of Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado.

Time passed, and Issac White Face was on and off the reservation in his search for employment. Through friends he heard about the GED program offered thgough the Oglala Sioux Community College. Issac decided that it was the way to improve his job situation and living conditions. It wasn't easy for this 48-year-old man, but he studied hard and passed his GED tests.

Since then, Issac has been working with the Parent-Child Center. First, as a secretary, then in the present position as Parent Coordinator. His duties and responsibilities include setting up meetings, activities, workshops, and recruiting children for the program and anything else he can help with. His main objective is to see that parental involvement is carried on. Issac likes his job and enjoys his involvement with the children and their parents.

White Face believes in education for Indian people even if it takes awhile. His future plans include enrolling in college courses to begin working toward a degree in business.

**NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE**
**Adult Education Center**
**Dull Knife Memorial College**
**Box 206**
**Lame Deer, Montana 59034**
**(406) 477-6623**

*Lynda Limberhand*
*Adult Education Director*

***Phoebe Means***

***"I believe that a person, if they put their heart into everything they do, can always get something good out of it."***

That's the philosophy of Phoebe Means,56,a recent graduate of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe's adult education program in Lame Deer, Montana.

The mother of seven, whose Indian name means "White Flower," says she didn't finish high school because she was hospitalized for about two years and had to quit. When she did get out of the hospital, she got married and started a family.

"My family kept me busy until they all grew up" she says. Once that happened, her husband encouraged her to return to school. She enrolled in the adult education program at Lame Deer and began receiving tutoring to obtain her GED. After a few months, she received her GED in December, 1978.

She was asked what advice she had for someone who had dropped out of school: "For them to return to school and pick up the basics, especially in Math and Reading. These will really help you in whatever you decide to do. Especially for older adults like myself. Taking GED and college keeps you involved and active."

**SENECA NATION OF INDIANS**
**Education Program**
**Allegany Reservation**
**Box 293**
**Salamanca, New York 14779**
**(716) 945-1480**

*Martha Barnes*
*Administrator/Teacher*

***Rose John***

With the dedicated help of the Seneca Nation of Indians' Adult Education Program, Rose John, a 54-year-old enrolled member of the Seneca Nation, recently received her New York State High School Equivalency Diploma.

It may not seem at all unusual for an elderly woman to earn a high school diploma, but it was part of a dream-come-true for Rose since she has spent nearly 43 years of her life in bed.

Born and raised in the town of Coldspring, on the Allegany Indian Reservation, Rose is a member of the Turtle Clan. She was almost 12 years old when confined to her bed because of rheumatoid arthritis, the chronic disease of painful swelling of the joints.

The doctors told her to remain as motionless as possible and administered heat treatments for a period of two years. "I hoped for a cure until I was fourteen, after I overheard the doctor tell my parents that there was no hope," Rose said.

Rose's highest aspiration has been to improve her grammar and the usage of the English language. Someday, she hopes to write children's stories and articles for Christian magazines.

After becoming practically blind in 1970, Rose's hopes were nearly lost again. She spent weeks in local hospitals while waiting for doctors to decide whether or not to operate. Rose was told the operation was impossible since she wasn't able to sit up in bed or in a wheelchair without any help. Because of an inner ear disorder, Rose had no balance and became very dizzy when in the vertical position.

Rose realized that her only chance to ever read or write again was to learn how to sit up. With the aid of her niece, she learned to roost herself up in bed. Finally, a wheelchair arrived at her home in Salamanca, N.Y., and she accomplished the feat of sitting up in it.

"It was hard to believe," Rose said, expressing her first thoughts about being in the chair. She continued, "they (relatives) asked me where I wanted to go. I said across the street to my neighbor's house. I had always joked around over the phone a lot with my neighbor telling her that I'd be over to visit!"

An eye specialist from Buffalo operated on Rose's eyes in 1973. Two weeks after the surgery, Rose could see grays and whites. While in the hospital she could only think of all the magazines and books she would soon be able to read.

When Rose gained back her vision and returned home, she was able to see

her great nieces and nephews for the first time. She loves children and has always had them around visiting.

She also sent for a high school correspondence course from LaSalle University. However, the course was not recognized by the State of New York, so the Seneca Nation of Indians' Adult Education Program tutored Rose from July until October, 1977.

Rose was allowed to take the New York State test in her home. After the news reached her that she had passed the exam, Rose could hardly believe it. "I was so poor with Math I thought I lost out," Rose explained.

Soon after earning her diploma, rose began correspondence courses under Canisius College. Her studies are primarily in Business and English. Rose usually does her studying on weekends, allowing herself time to read other materials and write letters.

She listens to the college lectures on tapes sent to her by Canisius. The Seneca Nation Educational Foundation (SNEF) provided a tape player for Rose and also pays for any other additional supplies she needs.

"No one tutors me now as I'm supposed to talk to my professors by phone if I have any trouble," Rose stated. She added that the work is easy, since a lot of it involves reading which is one of her favorite pastimes. Rose was also given a typewriter so that she can earn $15 - $20 per week in addition to the state and federal funds she receives.

Places that she has been able to visit and see are the Mormon Pageant in Palmyra,N.Y., Letchworth State Park,

and Artpark in Lewiston, N.Y.

Everyone, especially Rose, is proud and indebted to those who have encouraged, helped and given strength to her in accomplishing her goals.

***EDITOR'S NOTE: This story was written by Lori Johnson, a Seneca, enrolled in journalism at St. Bonaventure University, who has been working as a teaching assistant in the Adult Education program.***

**LUMBEE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSN.**
**Box 68**
**Pembroke, North Carolina 28372**

*Mitchell Locklear*
*Program Director*

---

***Jane Smiling***

Now at the age of 30, Jane Smiling sits and talks about how different things might have been if she had received her diploma at eighteen instead of the age of 29.

Jane is a Lumbee Indian who lives in Robeson County. She attended Pembroke Elementary and Senior High Schools until September, 1966. The previous July she had married James Smiling, a young man who at the time was farming with his father. When she re-entered school in the fall of 1966, she was aware she was pregnant and dropped out of school. After the baby was born, she started working in a local manufacturing plant. She worked until her second child in 1970. Afterwards, she worked in a local cotton mill for a few months.

Her husband had been attending class at the Adult Education Center located in the Shoehill area which was only a few miles from her home. She also felt the need to better her education and be able to find a better job. The Lumbee Regional Development Association was the sponsor of the Adult Center and Martha L. Hunt was the Educational Support Specialist who was assisting Wanda Harris who was Teacher Monitor.

Jane started at the center in November, 1977. She continued working in her books while a neighbor or her husband would babysit. Her husband

stopped attending classes at the center due to time conflicts with his job. In March of 1978 she received word that she had a part-time job working in a local school cafeteria. She went to work work there part-time and still continued her education in the center. She went two nights a week for three hours per night in the center. In May she tried for the GED and failed.

In August, she tried again and passed. She received her certificate in October and received word in November that her job in the cafeteria had become full-time since she received her GED.

Now, she wants to continue her education at a local post-secondary institution, Robeson Technical Institute, to become a cosmotologist. Through the classroom training offered by the CETA Program at the Lumbee Regional Development Association, she wil begin in the fall to attend school.

Jane feels that even through a lapse of years has passed without her diploma, now that she has it, the door to a world of opportunities has been opened.

**PALA ADULT INDIAN LEARNING CENTER**
**P.O. Box L**
**Pala, California 92059**
**(714) 742-1452**

*Roy Lattin*
*Project Director*

---

***Lisa Dean***

Lisa Dean is a successful GED graduate from the Pala Adult Indian Learning Center. Lisa passed all five tests on the very first attempt, and with high scores.

Ms. Dean will commence Community College classes beginning in the fall of 1979. She has taken a keen interest in the field of Veterinary medicine. The Daughters of the American Revolution has offered Lisa a full year scholarship.

Lisa was a high school drop-out employeed as a hotel maid for four years prior to completing the GED.

**NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER**
**Adult Education**
**2830 S. Robinson**
**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73109**
**(405) 235-3296**

*Ernie Zah*
*Coordinator of Adult Education*

***Marie Scott***

My name is Marie Scott, a full-blood Sioux, formerly from St. Francis, South Dakota. I was born Oct. 29, 1922 on the Rosebud Reservation. Before I left there, I attended St. Francis Mission for 10 years, graduated from the eighth grade and went two years of high school and dropped out.

I will always regret it because without a high school diploma you can't find a decent high-paying job. All of these years that I've been married and working at low-paying jobs, I told myself and my children, one of these days when I get a chance, I will go back to school and finish.

I heard of the Native American Center starting the Adult Education Program last October and I immediately enrolled. After five months of study and taking tests, I finally passed my test.

My comments about the Adult Education Program are: "It was wonderful to know that there are some people in this wide world who are interested in your welfare and future and they go all out to help you get your education." I really appreciate my instructor, Donna Smith, and Mr. Ernie Zah, the coordinator for the Adult Education Program, for having a lot of

patience and understanding with me and the other students.

Several times I became discouraged and wanted to chuck it all, but Mrs. Smith encouraged me to keep going as I was so close to getting my GED certificate. With that in mind and all the rest of the people behind us, edging us on, I was more determined to accomplish what I had started out to do five months ago.

So here I am with a GED certificate and really proud of it. Thanks a million for all the help and the nice dinners and luncheons. I give a big handshake to the whole staff for making it possible.

**NARRAGANSETT TRIBAL EDUCATION PROJECT, INC.**
**R.F.D. -2**
**Kenyon, Rhode Island 02836**
**(401) 364-3335**

*Mary S. Brown*
*Adult Education Program Director*

---

***Eleanor Dove***

Eleanor Dove has operated her own restaurant in Arcadia, Rhode Island for many years. She graduated from the Adult Education program with her GED last year and continues to be active in the education program. Currently she is preparing to enter the College Level Examination Program operated by the University of Rhode Island Extension Divison.

***June Burrell***

June Burrell is a widowed mother of three who enrolled in the Project's GED program to help her get a better full-time job. She received her diploma in May, 1978 and now works for the State of Rhode Island. In her new job, June is taking a census of Indians in Rhode Island; helping her people as well as herself.

***Helen Stanton***

Helen Stanton, a grandmother of five, was presented her GED diploma at the Tribe's graduation exercises in May, 1978. Since receiving her diploma, Helen has written several short stories for publication locally and in the Tribe's education newspaper.

***Bernice Young***

Bernice Young is a mother and grandmother. She passed her final GED test in January, 1979 and is now employed as a tutor in the Narragansett Indian Adult Education Program. She is now preparing to go to college to study food service management. Bernice's daughter is now enrolled in the GED program and expects to graduate soon.

**LOCAL INDIANS FOR EDUCATION**
**Box 4446**
**Redding, California 96001**
**(916) 275-1513**

*Vivien Hailstone*
*Program Director*

***Ron Carmelo***

My name is Ron Carmelo. I am a Maidu, Wintu, and Mission Indian and was born in Santa Ana, California on November 27, 1959.

I participated in Upward Bound through Chico State, but did not have the number of credits required to graduate from high school.

I applied for a job at the Indian Education Center in Project City. There were no job openings, but I was encouraged to enroll in a job procurement class and GED prep at the Center.

While preparing to take the GED, I worked at the Toyon-Wintu Center through California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC).

After some preparation, I passed my GED exam. CIMC developed a job slot for an Assessment and Needs Counselor which I qualified for.

Now I determine the qualification of applicants for CIMC job slots, assist with completion of necessary forms and work with applicants on career and goal assessment.

Soon I plan to begin work toward my B.A. degree in Social Work and Counseling. I enjoy photography, pottery, macrame and batik. I am very interested in Native foods and believe that all Indians should work together for Indians.

**THE MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE**
**Adult Education Program**
**P.O. Box 217**
**Cass Lake, Minnesota 56633**
**(218) 335-2252**

*Neil Buckanaga*
*Material/Developer, ABE Program*

***Ruth Newton***

Ruth Marie Newton received her GED in January, 1979. The twenty-one year old mother of two lives in Perham, Minnesota.

She says she heard about the program when the Recruiter Aide came over to bring her brother to work and explained the program to her. "That's just what I've been thinking about," Ruth said.

She adds:"I had always planned on getting my General Education Diploma, with the help of Sue Bishop and Beverly Heisler. I have it now. I believe that if they were not concerned about me I would not have it. I am very grateful for having the opportunity of getting my General Education Diploma."

Ruth plans to attend Detroit Lakes Area Vo-Tech in the fall quarter and major in Business Administration.

***Gerald Adams***

Gerald Adams plans to take his GED diploma along with him to the Detroit Lakes Area Vocational-Technical school where he is taking up welding.

Gerald's instructor says he was

characteristic of the other students who are in the program. "He is a gifted student, but needed encouragement and demonstraton of trust between the teacher and himself. For Gerry this program was difficult, basically he would not have made such an attempt to successfully receive his GED if it had not been for the continued persuasion and motivation by the ABE staff."

It was worth it in the end, however, because Gerry, 19, was one of the four top students at the Pine Point, White Earth area program.

***Pamela Holt***

Pamela Holt, of Waubun, Minnesota was another student signed up by a recruiter came to her home. During times when she was unable to come to class, the recruiter aide took the materials assigned by her instructor so she could keep progressing.

When she received her GED in March, 1979, her 62.2 average was one of the highest on the state level. The tester commented that she should attend college because she would be bored with any other kind of classes. As a result, Pam will attend fall quarter at Bemidji State University with a major in Biology and a minor in Forestry.

Pam says, "If it wasn't for the White Earth Adult Basic Education Program staff, Beverly Heisler and Suzanne Bishop, I wouldn't have my GED or be planning to enroll in college."

**AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER OF DALLAS**
**1314 Munger Boulevard**
**Dallas, Texas 75206**
**(214) 826-8856**

*Rose Charley*
*Director, Adult Education Program*

***David Bell***

After three months of studying with the American Indian Center Adult Education Program, David Bell received a "Certificate of Recognition" for the Student Showing Most Improvement.

David Bell, a Choctaw, was born May 13, 1942, in Philadelphia, Mississippi. He has one sister and two brothers. All of David's family grew up on the Choctaw reservation in Mississippi and had no formal education. One sister attended an adult education and is now working with computers.

David returned the second time to Dallas in February of 1978 and began working as custodian at the Dallas Inter-Tribal Center. One of his greatest desires was to learn to read and write when he learned about the Adult Education Program of the American Indian Center.

Barbara Roy, teacher, supervises two volunteer tutors, Marilyn Longden and Even Mahsetky, who work with David. They are using the Literacy Volunteers of America technique to teach him to read and write. Of his teachers, David says, "(they) have been good to me."

David enjoys listening to the radio, fishing and the country life. He aspires to obtain his driver's license soon. He hopes someday to work with the Bureau of Land Management in Soil and Conservation.

**HEART OF THE EARTH SURVIVAL SCHOOL**
**Adult Education**
**1209 Fourth Street S.E.**
**Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414**
**(612) 331-5650**

*Elaine Martin*
*Project Coordinator*

***Frances Isham***

As the doors of Stillwater State Prison close behind you, you enter the world of those imprisoned there. Unwilling as you might be to become a part of that world, it envelops you. The sights, the sounds, the faces become familiar to the point where the prison walls can no longer contain them. You can sense the pain, hate, frustration and boredom. And rarely, you can feel the hope and trust of those imprisoned in this fortress of ignorance and complacency.

Among those currently imprisoned in Stillwater Prison are seventy Indian men, ranging in age from 19 to 68. Frances Isham is one of these seventy.

Frances is now twenty-seven years old. He has spent the last 3½ years in Stillwater Prison. Druing this time he has aligned himself with his fellow Indian inmates in the Indian American Folklore Group. Frances is a traditional singer and dancer and seeks to learn more about his Ojibway heritage from other group members and elders. Frances views his culture as a survival tool within the institution providing him with the strength needed to face each new test within the prison walls.

Frances dropped out of public school when he was seventeen years old and never returned. Although he now

perceives education as an important goal, he was like many other Indian youth who find school irrelevant. While in the prison, Frances attempted to get his GED through the institution's educational program, but again found that the needed support was non-existent.

In October 1978, Frances enrolled in the GED equivalency program sponsored by the Heart of the Earth Survival School inside Stillwater Prison. Through his own committement and the support of other group members, Frances successfully completed his GED testing on May 9, 1979. His success has brought him much more than his GED certificate, however. With his new found confidence, Frances feels he can accomplish any goal he sets for himself. The walls surrounding Stillwater Prison are made of concrete, but through the educational success of Frances and other Indian Brothers and Sisters in prison, these concrete walls of ignorance will be torn down.

**NATIVE AMERICAN COMMITTEE, INC.**
**4546 North Hermitage**
**Chicago, Illinois 60640**
**(312) 728-1477**

*Dorene Wiese*
*Manager, Adult Learning Center*

***Janice Dominguez***

To give a profile of anyone, you must go back a little in their life. The previous years of a person's life will tell how they were shaped; give a clearer view of how life experiences affected them. To just say they have attained certain goals will not explain the climb or struggle they may have had to go through in order to reach their present position.

Janice Dominguez entered this world on October 27, 1955 into a proud and struggling family of five. Within a few years this number would rise to eight. Though money was sometimes scarce because of so many mouths to feed, there was always food on the table and plenty of love to go around.

Janice is an Assinniboine-Sioux, Oneida, and Winnebago Indian. She grew up in a non-Indian neighborhood on the north side of Chicago in a fairly decent neighborhood. She was never really involved in the Indian community until later in life. Memories of her childhood aren't very eventful. She does feel that the closeness of her family has helped to develop her self-confidence.

Social life for Janice began at an early age. Although she attended many parties and went to the neighborhood dances, she was wise enough not to fall into a wild crowd. She didn't drink, smoke, or do drugs like so many of the

neighborhood kids were doing. Her main goal at that time was just to enjoy life and be around a lot of people. Being with and working with many people is still something she enjoys to this day.

It was during one of the neighborhood dances that Janice met her future husband. He was lead singer in a local band and three years older. In her third year of high school, Janice, like so many other young girls, became pregnant and married; thus ended her education for the time being .

Life being what it is, there were many financial hardships in her marriage. At the age of seventeen, she began what was to become her first of many jobs in order to help ease the financial burden on her husband. She has worked as a cashier, held a factory job, learned to operate a switchboard, filed in an office, and held a receptionist position. Through all this, there seemed to be little satisfaction from life or marriage. As her marriage began to crumble, Janice's determination began to grow.

In 1976, Janice decided to look into getting her GED. On her own, she spent one week of intense study to prepare herself for her test. After the one week period, she went to register and take it. Upon receiving her GED certificate, she felt immense self-satisfaction. She had proved to herself she was not a dummy. Janice had now reached a turning point in life. If there was a goal to reach for, she could do it. If there were new heights to climb, she would reach them. She saw that if a person is determined enough, anything is possible.

Upon learning of an opening at the Native American Committee GED program for a non-certified instructor,

she left her receptionist job at Bell Federal Savings and Loan. Her job there had been stifling and seemed to carry no hope for advancement. Here was a chance for change, for more opportunities, a way to get involved with the Indian community. It was also a chance to put to the test her new found feeling of self-confidence. Working in close contact with a group of people who needed help in preparing for the GED helped build her new image even more. She found she was able to learn what being an Indian meant. She told me that she had finally found the true meaning of her heritage. Janice told how she has finally found a sense of belonging somewhere. It's comparable to a feeling of coming home, feeling comfortable, and knowing you belong.

Working at the Native American Committee's GED program has given her many chances of developing curriculum for life-coping skills. Janice is in charge of her own time and she puts the most she can into this program for the good of the students. At the same time being able to take charge has helped her tremendously. She was given a chance to prove herself and she has.

One other thing Janice has undertaken is the Adult Indian Education Survey. She has gone through training to learn the different aspects of being a successful surveyor. At the present time, she is still involved in going out to survey the Indian community to help prove to Washington that Indian people have needs that must be met.

As part of the training offered at the GED program, Janice has also taken a self-management course which not only helps her on the job, but has proven indispensable in her personal life.

As a working mother, Janice sees the problems many women are now facing. One big disadvantage she sees is that she cannot be home to see her two children grow and develop. They are in the hands of a sitter and what happens during the day she hears secondhand instead of being able to share in it. Janice has only a few hours at night and weekends to spend with her children but she said she makes the most of those precious hours.

The advantage for her is the income because it lets her offer her children a better life than she could before. Another big advantage is she is able to develop her own social life which helps ease the pressures of being a working mother. Janice has seen her children become more self-reliant at an early age which she sees as a good sign. It wil help them later in life should anything happen to her.

Janice has often said life is hard, but her advice to herself and everyone else is don't give up. It's not worth quitting, no matter how many pressures and problems there are. There are always people around to help if you are willing to reach for a friendly hand. But, she stresses, don't depend on anyone else too much because when you fall, you are really the only one who can pick yourself up again.

It has to come from within, there has to be that self-determination to go on and up. Janice Dominguez, young Indian women, working mother, and GED instructor, has that determination and I believe, she will reach whatever goals she sets for herself in life.

***EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was written by Vicki Elizondo of the Native American Committee.***

**MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS**
**Adult Education Program**
**Route 7, Box 21**
**Philadelphia, Mississippi 39350**
**(601) 656-5251**

*Margaret V. Naugle*
*Director, Adult Education Program*

***Lillie Billy***

Lillie Billy, 39, a Mississippi Choctaw, completed the 10th grade at Pearl River High School and one year of stenographic training in a vocational school in Oklahoma. After rearing her family, she returned to school by attending the adult education classes offered by the Choctaw Adult Education Program on the reservation. She received her GED while serving as a Parent-Coordinator for a Family Education Program. After completing the GED, she served the Choctaw Utility Commission as secretary and is presently working as a bank teller at the Citizens Bank. Lillie enjoys her work and is enrolled in college courses to better prepare for the future.

***Collins Billy***

Collins Billy, 40, is a Mississippi Choctaw who completed the 9th grade at Pearl River High School. After working many years, he decided to attend adult education classes to obtain his GED. He felt this would help him be better qualified and prepared for his job as a certified medical technician. He completed his GED within two months and received his certification as a medical technician. His long range goal is to become a certified public accountant for which he is already taking college courses.

**CREEK NATION**
**Division of Human Development**
**Creek Nation Tribal Capitol Complex**
**Hiway 75 South, Box 1144**
**Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447**
**(918) 756-8800**

*Pat Wahnee*
*Director, Division of Human Development*

***Hepsey Gilroy***

Hepsey Gilroy is a full-blood Creek Indian born in a small rural community located seven miles northwest of Henryetta, Oklahoma, known as the Wilson Community. Hepsey, as she is called by her friends, still resides in this community.

Hepsey attended Eufaula Boarding School, Eufaula, Oklahoma until she finished the seventh grade. She did her eighth and ninth grade work in Dwight Mission, which is a church mission school, near Vian, Oklahoma. Then she "quit school because parents did not force their kids to go to school in those days."

In 1963, after the youngest child completed school, Hepsey started studying beadwork and other crafts at the Arts and Crafts Department in Okmulgee. Later she was employed by the Community Action as Arts and Crafts Instructor. In 1972, she was employeed by the Creek Nation of Oklahoma. She works as an Arts and Crafts Instructor in the Arts and Crafts Department of the Division of Human Development. Hepsey drives to different communities to instruct beading, loom weaving, basketweaving, fingerweaving, macrame, and creative arts.

Then she enrolled in a GED class to prove to herself that she could obtain a certificate, as Creek Nation was leaning

towards a certificate or high school diploma as job requirements for their employees.

On March 7, 1977, at the age of 64 years, Hepsey took the GED test. She is now "over 65", employed, and proof that a person is never too old to learn.

Hepsey, in addition to her work with the Creek Nation, instructs part-time during the summer months for Tulsa Junior College.

***Mary Roberts***

September 17th marks the fifth year of employment with the Creek Nation of Oklahoma for Mary Roberts. Mary is the Education Field Representative in the Adult Education Department of the Division of Human Development.

Mary is responsible for recruiting students and setting up ABE/GED classes in the different communities in the Creek Nation. She also tutors, assists the instructor in the classroom, besides transporting students to and from classes.

Mary dropped out of school in her Sophomore year and married. During the years of establishing a home and raising five children, she realized the importance of a high school diploma. Her husband often urged her to go back to school and finish, but the children were small yet, and she just didn't have the time for it.

Then, in the spring of 1970, Mary heard of the Adult Education Program. Recognizing her need for further

education, she enrolled and received her GED through the first Adult Education class set up in the Creek Tribe.

After receiving the GED, Mary worked at various jobs including that of a teacher aide in the Creek Nation Summer School program. She enjoyed working in the program and wished that it could have been a full time job. A month after the summer job, Mary applied for a position in the Indian Children's Education Program. Mary got the job. Since then, she has worked her way up from a Community Aide to her present position.

Mary states, "Getting the GED was an important step in my life, and I never dreamed that it would take me to where I am now. I am grateful for the opportunity it has given me to work in this capacity."

Mary is thinking about enrolling in night classes in a nearby college and beginning work toward a degree. She already has seven hours of college credit.

**MINNEAPOLIS REGIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER**
**Department of Education**
**1530 East Franklin Avenue South**
**Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404**

*Jan Donnelly*
*Education Director*

---

***Teresa Dominguez***

Teresa is 24 years old, married, with a family of 3 children. Her husband is presently in the Army and is stationed in Korea. Teresa completed her GED testing on August 7, 1978, and enrolled in Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota the same month . At present, she has completed one year at Macalester and is employed at the Minneapolis Regional Native American Center, through the Education Department and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe as a curriculum developer. Teresa plans on continuing her education at Macalester and is looking forward to a degree in History. Teresa is a Chippewa from the Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota.

***Patrick Slayton***

Patrick was born in Waukegan, Illinois and was raised by his grandmother until her death. He then lived with his sister up until the time he moved to Minneapolis in January, 1979.

Patrick dropped out of school in 1975, and was not comfortable in returning because he was already too far behind in his class.

Patrick tried working at two different jobs; Industrial Help and Flour City Architectural Metals, each lasting about a month. Patrick did not feel he had a

chance for advancement in these jobs, so he enrolled in the Minneapolis Regional Native American Center Adult Basic Education program on April 18, 1979, and completed his GED testing on April 27, 1979.

The future plans that Patrick has for the fall of 1979 is enrolling at North Hennepin Vocational Tech in the Auto Mechanics field.

Patrick enjoys bowling, skiing, building model cars, fishing and hunting. Good luck to you Patrick!

***Darrell Nomeland***

Darrell moved to Minneapolis when he was discharged from the Army in 1975. While in the Army, he spent two years in Florida as a Hawk Missile Crew Chief and he also spent some time in Korea. Darrell was in the Job Corps for six months in Utah. He worked as a machine operator for a time but was not satisfied with this type of work and decided to move on to something else.

Darrell enrolled in the Minneapolis Regional Native American Center's Adult Basic Education program on February 7, 1979 and completed his GED testing on February 14. Presently he is enrolled at the North Hennepin Tech Center and is studying in the area of refrigeration, air conditioning, and heating, a two year program, that he hopes to complete in March, 1981. Upon completion of that course, he hopes to start his own business.

Darrell enjoys arts and crafts, beading, mountain climbing, and plays the guitar. He is a Chippewa from the Turtle Mountain reservation.

***Kenneth Johnson***

Kenneth is a Chippewa from the Leech Lake Reservation and is 34 years old. He completed his GED testing on November 29, 1978. After completion, he started on a vocational program in truck driving, which was interrupted, but he plans to continue his training in the near future. While preparing for his GED, Ken drove school bus for Columbia Transit part-time, and filled in the rest of the work time driving cab.

Also, Kenneth has recently consented to become a member of our program advisory board.

**YA-KA-AMA INDIAN EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT, INC.**
**6215 Eastside Road**
**Healdsburg, California 95448**
**(707) 887-1541**

*Edward P. Harris*
*Executive Director*

***Stephanie Pike***

February 28, 1979, was graduation day for Stephanie Pike. While attending Ya-Ka-Ama, she earned three certificates and achieved a typing speed of 70 words per minute.

Stephanie expressed her goal to become an attorney, with particular interest in Indian law. Keeping this goal in mind, prior to her graduation from Ya-Ka-Ama, Stephanie enrolled in Santa Rosa Junior College evening classes to continue the formal education that would lead her to that goal.

Stephanie began at Ya-Ka-Ama in September 1977, and promptly completed her basic requirements for the Business Education Certificate. After a three month leave to have her baby boy, she returned to classes and completed advanced work in Typing, English, Accounts Payable, Business Machines, and Business Recordkeeping. For this advanced work, she received a certificate of special recognition. During her last months of school, Stephanie energetically pursued and completed the Legal Clerk-Typist course, qualifying her to work as a clerk in a legal office.

As a legal clerk-typist, she will not only familiarize herself with the actual workings of a law office, but wil be able to earn the funds necessary to the completion of her education: her Juris Doctorate!

**INDIAN EDUCATION BOARD,INC.**
**Indian Adult Learning Center**
**1801 E. 34th Street**
**Tacoma, Washington 98404**

*Joe LaRoque*
*Program Director*

***Dolores Godwin***

My husband retired from the military in late August, 1974, and returned to the Tacoma, Washington area.

I made a visit to the Tacoma Indian Center with my sister one day in October, 1974, and found that they had adult education classes offered at the facility. I inquired into the course of study offered and signed up that day and started school the next day until I finished my high school completion program.

I took every course I could and also attended shcool through the summer in order to graduate in late June of 1975.

It was always my desire to finish high school but the opportunity was never there. Throughout my husband's military career (24 years) and raising seven children, it did not seem right to pursue my education when I had other obligations at home.

When I mentioned the opportunity was never there, I did not mean that high school completion was not available locally at different locations where we lived, but I felt apprehension in attending a non-Indian cultural situation which was one of the causes of my dropping out of high-school to begin with. I can really see the need for culturally-sensitive school systems and

the reasons Indian students drop out.

The high school program at the Indian Center took place in the day time and I felt I was not taking time away from my family as I was in school at the times they were also attending school. jThis arrangements works very well and allowed enough flexibility to take off a day now and then to do other things as long as you completed your credits for the quarter.

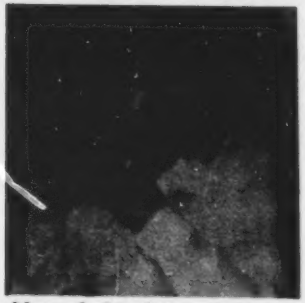
During the time of my husband's career in the military, I was not idle. I got involved with various projects and community service. I taught Conference Christian Doctrine (C.C.D.) for almost five years. I was a den mother with the Boy Scouts, a Girl Scout leader, active with the P.T.A. and various committees at the schools. I served as a mother's helper on the Science Committee, working with the teachers and students. I was involved with various fund-raising projects. I also had over 150 hours working as a Red Cross volunteer at a military dental clinic. As part of my social obligations I was a reporter for the Battalion my husband was involved in, writing the social column for all activities taking place.

After graduation I applied for a position with the Puyallyp Tribe and started out as a secretary and then moved to Executive Secretary. I have been in Health Planning for about two and a half years.

My goal is to continue my education and get my college degree.

**UNITED INDIANS OF ALL TRIBES FOUNDATION**
**Adult Basic and Vocational Education Program**
**Box 99253**
**Seattle, Washington 98199**
**(206) 285-4425**

*Robert LaFontaine*
*Program Director*



***Hazel Jack***

One of the early participants in the United Indians ABE program has received her GED.

Hazel Jack, 22, a member of the Cowichan Tribe on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, received the welcome news after four years of studying a little bit at a time.

Hazel was born in Duncan, B.C., the second-youngest of seven children. She attended elementary schools around Duncan. When she was eight, her teacher asked her to help translate the English lessons into Cowichan for her classmates who could not speak English.

She ended up being transferred from one school to another to do translation for various teachers. This gave her a good reputation as a translator, but did little to help her own educational development. She stayed in the fourth grade for two years and finally, at the age of 12, moved to Seattle with her mother.

Hazel attended a number of schools in the city and eventually went as far as the 10th grade when she finally quit because of what she felt was prejudice

on the part of her teacher.

Later that year, a counselor sent her to the United Indians program. She was tested and found to be doing ninth grade level work. Every day for the next six months Hazel took study materials home and returned for help. At the same time, she took a part-time job working in the library at **Northwest Indian News**.

Family needs made it necessary for her to find full-time employment and discontinue her GED work. A year later, she found time to return to UIATF's program to get more study materials and passed her social studies test.

Once again, however, the pressure of full-time work slowed her GED progress. A counselor suggested she attend a non-Indian program which was close to her home, but after three months, she dropped out because the pace of the program did not fit her schedule.

Meanwhile, she was getting valuable experience in a training program for nurses' aides. She worked at a nursing home for one year and then got a job at the Veteran's Hospital as a medical technician's aide. Unfortunately, the funds for that position expired and she was laid off.

Undaunted, Hazel once again made her way back to United Indians. She got some science books, took them home, returned to United Indians three times—studying all day and passed her test.

With only one test to go, she kept on studying and took her final test. Unfortunately, she was one point short of getting her GED. Hazel persisted, and with the help of the instructors at

UIATF, retook her test and got her GED.

Speaking about the UIATF instructors, Hazel says, "They helped a lot because they understood the problems of working and having family responsibilities. They make the program fit your schedule and don't force you into it."

Hazel is interested in the medical field and plans to attend a six month pre-college training program soon. She would someday like to be a lab technician.

**FT. BELKNAP COMMUNITY COUNCIL**
**Adult Education Project**
**Ft. Belknap Agency**
**Harlem, Montana 59526**
**(406) 353-2205**

*Loren Stiffarm*
*Project Coordinator*

---

***Amy Blackbird***

*A Memorial*

July 19, 1978 was a fruitful day in the life of one of our Fort Belknap Indian Community elders. This was the day that Amy Blackbird, a full blood Gros Ventre, was notified that she successfully completed her GED tests. She received her General Educational Development certificate from the Office of Public Instruction in Helena, Montana.

This is unique because Amy is 64 years old! She was born on July 14, 1914 to George Blackbird and Angela Deafy. She started school at Fort Belknap Boarding School and went as far as the fourth grade. Amy then attended Flandreau Indian School, Flandreau, South Dakota. She completed the eighth grade at Flandreau studying different vocations. In 1932 Amy enrolled in Harlem High School and was influenced by the wishes of her parents to continue her education. She was a victim of the ignorance and cultural differences of the dominant society and never finished high school.

Forty-six years later, through constant encouragement from her granddaughter Nona Kerr (who was the first GED graduate of the Adult Education Project in 1977), and five children, Amy enrolled in the Fort Belknap Education Department's GED program. Under

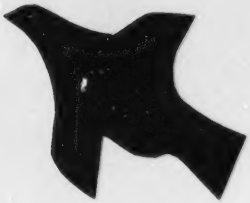
skillful instruction from Sister Laura and Sister Kathleen, she started classes at night. During the bad winter Amy attended classes held at the Detox Center where she is currently employed.

"Surprised" was her first reaction upon receiving her GED certificate. She was taking the classes on Nona's urging and wasn't really sure of herself after she had been out of school for so long. As her interest in Math and English grew, Amy knew that she could succeed in attaining her GED.

Amy is a classic example of how people young and old alike can continue their education by overcoming barriers that would otherwise prevent them from doing so.

In leaving Amy said, "The youth of today should overcome their particular problems and stay in school to further their education." She added, "Indian Counselors, Indian teachers, would help solve some of the problems, but it is up to the students themselves to put forth the effort."

***Editor's Note: This profile originally appeared in the Fall 1978 issue of* The Indian Educator. *Shortly before this book of profiles went to press, Amy Blackbird passed away. Her story is printed here as a tribute by the Adult Education staff at Ft. Belknap and the staff of* The Indian Educator.**



## PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS


MOHAWK TRIBAL COUNCIL ..... 3
CUMBERLAND COUNTY ASSN. FOR INDIAN PEOPLE ..... 9
NISQUALLY INDIAN TRIBE ..... 10
OGLALA SIOUX COMMUNITY COLLEGE ..... 13
NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE ..... 15
SENECA NATION OF INDIANS ..... 16
LUMBEE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION ..... 20
PALA ADULT INDIAN LEARNING CENTER ..... 22
NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER (OKLAHOMA CITY) ..... 23
NARRAGANSETT TRIBAL EDUCATION PROJECT ..... 25
LOCAL INDIANS FOR EDUCATION (REDDING,CA.) ..... 27
THE MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE ..... 28
AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER OF DALLAS ..... 30
HEART OF THE EARTH SURVIVAL SCHOOL ..... 31
NATIVE AMERICAN COMMITTEE (CHICAGO) ..... 33
MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS ..... 37
CREEK NATION ..... 38
MINNEAPOLIS REGIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER ..... 41
YA-KA-AMA INDIAN EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT, INC. ..... 44
INDIAN EDUCATION BOARD, INC. (TACOMA) ..... 45
UNITED INDIANS OF ALL TRIBES FOUNDATION (SEATTLE) ..... 47
FT. BELKNAP COMMUNITY COUNCIL ..... 50